

## **PARISH OF HEATHFIELD AND WALDRON**

**ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY – TUESDAY 13 APRIL 2010**

### **Chairman's Report**

I have pleasure in presenting my annual Chairman's report for the year 2009/2010. I have enjoyed getting out and about in the community and seeing the excellent work that so many of you do to make the Parish such a vibrant and interesting place to live.

This year is my first year as Chairman, having been elected last May, and it is a great privilege to Chair the Council. I would like to take this opportunity of thanking my fellow Councillors for their support and the Clerk, Diana Francis, and her excellent team.

This report is a time for reflection and the Annual Parish Assembly is an opportunity for parishioners to ask any questions they have on issues that may affect them within the parish.

Once again our Committees have been busy and a brief report on their efforts will set the scene for the work that is quietly and efficiently undertaken.

Burial Grounds Committee The war memorials at Waldron and Old Heathfield have had their annual clean. The land at Theobalds Green will be partly used as a new burial ground and plans will be submitted during the year.

Recreation Grounds and Properties Committee During the year we have continued the maintenance of all our playing fields and playgrounds. This is a large task which costs a considerable sum of money. Following consultation some new play equipment will be installed at the Broad Oak play area.

In conjunction with Unity Community Association, the play area at Leeves Common will be upgraded. Work on the Skatepark was completed with funding from the Play Pathfinder scheme and Youth Opportunity Fund and was officially opened on December 12<sup>th</sup>. In conjunction with the Burial Grounds Committee the land at Theobalds Green is in the planning stage for use as allotments and recreational use.

Highways, Planning and Street Lighting Committee This Committee has during the year commented on some 167 planning applications and fed comments and recommendations through to Wealden District Council. The Committee continues its regular dialogue with East Sussex County Council's Highways Department over a number of proposed traffic schemes in the Parish.

We are pleased to see the completion of the A265/A267 (St Barts) junction which has helped the traffic flow. The final phase of the High Street improvements are due to be completed by the end of April. We continue to express our concern to ESCC over the general state of the roads in the Parish.

Finance and General Purposes Committee During this year the Committee has agreed grants to 24 organisations that serve our Parish. A number of other grant applications were considered but declined for a variety of reasons. This year has seen a number of

pressures on our budget and it has been necessary to increase the precept for 2010/2011 by some 1.26% on a band D property, even though some monies were transferred from our reserves. The call on our budget increases year on year but we are mindful of the need to keep future Precepts as low as possible.

Rural Transport Sub-Committee This Sub-Committee has agreed to financially support the Heathfield community bus transport initiative run by the Heathfield Partnership.

General I am pleased to report policing in Heathfield continues to be enhanced – we now have Sgt Ruth Hammerton and 4 PCSO's based at Heathfield. The team has been involved in operations to bring much vandalism and anti-social behaviour under control and we are pleased to thank Sussex Police for this improved and maintained position.

In consultation with and financial support from the Police and the Safer Wealden Partnership, the Council have agreed to install 3 CCTV cameras in the town in this financial year.

In February the Parish Council, through ESCC Trading Standards and the Safer Wealden Partnership, launched the designation of the parish as a No Cold Calling Zone. We hope this will give some protection and reassurance to our parishioners.

I would like to thank all the organisations and charities that contribute so much to our Parish and the volunteers who keep them going. I should mention the events that bring publicity to our area such as the Heathfield Show, Le Marché, the Cuckoo Fair and the Heathfield Carnival. Not only do they raise the profile of our Parish but bring people and trade into the area. I also thank the Heathfield Partnership and the Chamber of Trade for the work they do to improve the vitality of the town and local business.

I should also thank the Millennium Green Trust for their continued work in providing a very well used green space in the centre of Heathfield.

None of the foregoing would be possible without the dedication of the Parish Councillors who continue to give their time without reward and the excellent Clerk and office staff who provide such support and I thank them all on everyone's behalf for their commitment and contribution to the life of the Parish.

I would also like to thank our local elected members on both the County and District Councils for their considerable contribution to this Parish.

In conclusion I think the past twelve months have been a year of steady progress for the community, much has been achieved, much still needs to be done, but I am confident that the people of the Parish will face up to the challenges ahead and continue to make this Parish a better place to live.

Peter Newnham  
April 2010